The Origins and Development of the English Language Chapter 11: New Words from Old

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New Words from Old

- New words constantly enter the English language
- 5 processes
  - Creating
  - Combining
  - Shortening
  - Blending
  - Shifting

Creating Words: Root Creations

- Root creations: create a new word out of no other meaningful elements
- Very rare
- Kodak
- Nylon, Dacron, Orlon

Creating Words: Echoic Words

- Echoic Words: words that imitate a sound
- Imitative: Meow, moo, bowwow, vroom
- Symbolic: bang, bump
  - Can alliterate: splish splash splosh
  - Can rhyme: bang clang
  - Can double: bowwow, peewee, choo-choo

Creating Words: Ejaculations

- Represent the instinctive vocal response
- Sometimes the written response becomes so conventional that you instinctively say it.
  - Ouch!
- Conventionalized ejaculations
  - Ha-ha, tehee

- Tush
- Pish, pshaw
- Yum-yum
- Pew, pugh
- Ugh
- Tut-tut, tsk-tsk
- Uh-huh
- Brack, braak
- Bronx cheer, Raspberry: raspberry tart

Combining Words: Compounding

- Putting two or more words together to form a new word with a meaning in some way different from its elements.
- black + board = blackboard
- Compounds spelled in 3 different ways; unpredictable and variable
  - Solid: hatchback
  - Hyphenated: laid-back
  - Open: center back

Combining Words: Compounding

- Compounding was common in Old English
- Compounding continues now
- Many internet related terms are compounds

Combining Words: Compounding

- Spelling and Pronunciation
- Spelling varies
  - Adjectives: one-horse, outgoing
  - Verbs: broadcast, double-date
  - Nouns: ice cream, sit-in, ice box
  - Prepositions: upon, out of
  - Adverbs: nevertheless
  - Pronouns: myself

Combining Words: Compounding

- Spelling and Pronunciation
- Compounds vary in stress, phrases have more even stress
  - A man-eating shrimp
  - A man eating shrimp

Combining Words: Compounding Stress differences

- Hotbed
- Highbrow
- Blackball
- Greenhouse
- Makeup
- Headhunter
- Loudspeaker

- Hot bed
- High brow
- Black ball
- Green house
- Make up
- Head hunter
- Loud speaker

Combining Words: Compounding Stress differences

- Compound nouns are usually stressed on the first element
- Compound adverbs and prepositions are stressed on the last syllable
- Verbs and pronouns vary

Combining Words: Compounding Stress differences

- Phonetic changes occur
- Vowel reduction in these words:
- Englishman, highwayman, gentleman, horseman, postman, Maryland, Iceland, woodland, highland
- No vowel reduction in these words:
- Businessman, milkman, iceman, wonderland, movieland, Disneyland,

Combining Words: Compounding Stress differences

- More vowel reductions
  - Norfolk, Suffolk, Portsmouth, Wyecombe, Edinburgh, Folkestone
  - Coxswain, Keswick, Durham
  - Boatswain, forecastle, breakfast, Christmas, cupboard, Greenwich

Combining Words: Compounding Stress differences

- Traditional pronunciations are going back to spelling pronunciations
  - Boatswain
  - Clapboard
  - Grindstone
  - Wristband
  - Waistcoat
  - Forehead

Combining Words: Compounding Amalgamated Compounds

- Some words that were originally compounds look like one word now
  - Daisy from dayesyë ‘day’s eye’
  - As from eal+swa ‘all so’
  - Garlic ‘spear leek’
  - Hussy ‘house wife’
  - Lord, Marshall, Nostril, Sheriff
  - Boston, Bewley, Sussex, Norwich, Durward, Purdue, Thurston,

Combining Words: Compounds

- Function and Form of Compounds
- See the book for examples of:
- Lots of functions
- Many forms

Combining Word Parts: Affixing Affixes from Old English

- Many affixes used to be independent words
- a- was an
- ly was līc meaning body
- līc = like
- Modern English is again using like as a suffix to form adjectives
  - gentlemanly ➔ gentlemanlike

Combining Word Parts: Affixing Affixes from Other Languages

- Latin, Greek, French supply affixes that are used to create new words
  - Greek anti-
  - Latin pro-, super-
- Suffixes
  - Latin -ese, -an, -al
  - Greek -ize

Combining Word Parts: Affixing Voguish Affixes

- Affixes that become fashionable during certain time periods
- -wise meaning ‘in respect to’ or ‘in the manner of’
- -ize used in accessorize, moisturize, sanitize, glamorize, tenderize
- -ism used in racism, sexism, ageism, Me-ism

Combining Word Parts: Affixing

Shortening Words: Clipped Forms

- A shortening of a longer word that sometimes supplants the original
- omnibus, mobile vulgus, pantaloons, taximeter cabriolet, brassiere, periwig
- phone, zoo, extra, flu, auto, ad
- fax, perk, prenup

Shortening Words: Clipped Forms

- Clipping can cut between words or morphemes
  - soap opera > soap
  - biography > bio
- But sometimes the cut in the middle of morphemes
- rehabilitate > rehab
- helicopter > chopper, heliport

Shortening Words: Initialisms Alphabetisms and Acronyms

- Clipping can be just the use of the initial letters of words or syllables for brevity or catchiness
  - HIV, YMCA, TB, TV, PJs
- Sometimes words are clipped to turn them into euphemisms
  - BO, BM, VD

Shortening Words: Initialisms Alphabetisms and Acronyms

- Alphabetism: when you say the names of the letters
- CD, OK
- Acronym: when you say the initialism as a word. akros ‘tip’ + onyma ‘name’
- AWOL, WASP, ROTC, VP
- Snafu, fubar
- The f-word

Shortening Words: Initialisms Alphabetisms and Acronyms

- Reverse Acronyms
- Choosing the words to make a good acronym
- WAVES
- NOW
- ZIP

Shortening Words: Initialisms Alphabetisms and Acronyms

- Can become very commonly used words
- Scuba, laser, SUV, SWAT, DNA, NASA, radar, DVD

Shortening Words: Apheretic and Aphetic Forms

- Apheresis: omission of sound from the beginning of a word
  - Excuse me > ’scuse me
  - Because > ’cause
- Sometimes apheresis results in a new word becoming common
  - Defender > fender
  - Defense > fence
  - Etiquette > ticket (meaning is very different now)
  - Opossum > Possum , Raccoon > Coon

Shortening Words: Apheretic and Aphetic Forms

- Aphesis: Omitting the unstressed vowel at the beginning of a word
  - acute > cute
  - esquire > squire
  - alone > lone

Shortening Words: Back-Formations

- Making a new word from an older word that is mistakenly assumed to be a derivative of it
- to burgle from burglar
- pease (sing) > pea
- cherise (sing) > cherry
- alms (sing) > alms (plural)

Blending Words

- Combining two words together to make a new word
  - flush = flash + gush 1548
  - twirl = twist + whirl 1598
- Lewis Carroll portmanteau words
  - Chortle, Galumph, Snark
- Successful blends
  - Motel, Urinalysis, Quasar, Brunch, Modem

Blending Words: Folk Etymology

- When you mishear a word and make up a new word, some mistakes becomes popular
- cucaracha > cockroach
- chest of drawers > Chester drawers
- hobble eggs

Shifting Words to New Usages: Functional Shift

- Functional Shift: Using one part of speech for another part of speech with no change in form
- This is easy to do in English because of the lack of inflection
- Parts of the body have become verbs
- Verbs become nouns
- Nouns become adjectives
- Adjectives become nouns
- Etc.

Shifting Words to New Usages: Common Words from Proper Names

- Commonization: Functional Shift in which a proper names becomes a common word
- Eponym: The word that is derived from a proper name; the person who bore the name that became the common word
- Lynch, Boycott, Sandwich

Shifting Words to New Usages: Common Words from Proper Names

- Sometimes the names are slightly changed
  - John Duns Scotus > Dunce
- Characters from literature or mythology
  - Atlas, hector, Don Juan, aphrodisiac
- Place names have become common words
  - Babel, blarney, china, shanghai, turkey, sherry, sodomy,

Shifting Words to New Usages: Common Words from Proper Names

- Some brand names of commercial products have become so widespread for their names to pass into common use
- escalator, zipper
- Band-Aid, Scotch tape, Kleenex
- to hoover, to google, to xerox